

May, discouraging. Evidently the fate of the expedition was in the melting pot. For the moment, therefore, the only course open to the Commander-in-Chief was to endeavour, by means of local attacks, to keep the initiative in his own hands, and to gain some more elbow room at the southern end of the peninsula. In this spirit he telegraphed to Lord Kitchener on the 18th May: "Although I have made requests for certain "additional troops, I am sure you will realize that does not "imply that I am not doing all I possibly can with the force "at my disposal, and every day sees some improvement in our "position."

This telegram was no exaggeration. Already on the British and French fronts at Helles the spirits of the troops had been raised and their positions improved by several minor successes, and these were to continue throughout the month of May. At Anzac, too, Australian and New Zealand units had made some bold sorties, and by hard digging had increased the strength of their line. Nevertheless, in the absence of any definite promise of adequate reinforcements, the news that yet another Turkish corps had reached the peninsula, was received with grave misgivings.

CHAPTER II

MAY AT ANZAC

(Sketch 1)

THE object of the Australian and New Zealand landing at Anzac had been to assist the main attack at Helles by a threat¹ against the enemy communications. Owing to being carried a mile out of their course by an unexpectedly strong current, and to the excessively difficult country in which they eventually found themselves, the Australians were unable to gain their objective; and the end of the first week found the whole corps hemmed in by the Turks within 1,000 yards of the shore. Nevertheless, clinging with fine determination to the perilous foothold they had won, and keeping the enemy in constant expectation of attack, the Australian and New Zealand troops continued to render valuable assistance to their British comrades in the south throughout the critical month of May, and to fulfil the duty of a detachment by keeping from the main theatre a hostile force considerably larger than its own.¹

Threatening the very heart of the Narrows defences, and forming a screen behind which further troops could land in comparative security, the Anzac corps would already seem to have been regarded by the Turkish High Command as greater menace than the British and French divisions at Helles. The Anzac front line was in places less than five miles from the Turkish supply depot at Kilia Bay, and only a few hundred yards from positions on the main ridge whence the Narrows could be kept under observation and daylight traffic interrupted.

Sir Ian Hamilton, as we have seen in the last chapter, was already considering the advantage of striking his main blow from Anzac Cove. But it was still too early to come to a definite decision; and for the moment—and in any case till Achi Baba had fallen—he determined that General Birdwood's corps must continue to act as a detaining force in the north.

The Turkish force in the Anzac theatre at the middle of May is now known to have been 3 divisions.

Throughout the month of May, therefore, the action of the Australians and New Zealanders was guided by the instructions issued by G.H.Q. to General Birdwood on the 1st May:

Until you receive further instructions, no general advance is to be initiated by you. . . . But this is not to preclude any forward movements which may be usefully undertaken with a view to occupying such points as may facilitate your advance hereafter, and meanwhile compel the enemy to maintain a large force on your front. By this means you will relieve pressure on the troops in the southern portion of the peninsula, which is your present rôle.

The minute fraction of the Gallipoli peninsula occupied by the Anzac corps at this period was roughly triangular in shape, with the base of the triangle extending for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles along the coast, and its apex at Quinn's Post, a thousand yards from the sea. Of the two sides of the triangle facing the enemy, the southern and longer one stretched from the foot of Bolton's Ridge to Quinn's Post, a distance of some 2,500 yards. From Quinn's, the northern and shorter side—1,200 yards long—turned west, and, after leap-frogging across the head of Monash Gully *via* Pope's Hill, ran down Walker's Ridge to the sea. The total area of the triangle was rather less than 400 acres, and but for its steep hillsides and tortuous ravines every inch of it would have been within rifle-shot of the enemy's trenches.

The main Turkish positions in the Anzac zone at the beginning of May were on Gun and Mortar Ridges and on the high ground overlooking the upper end of Monash Gully. But the enemy had established a number of strong advanced posts close to the Anzac trenches, and these were soon developed into a formidable front line.

After the despatch of the 2nd Australian Brigade and the New Zealand Brigade to Helles for the Second Battle of Krithia¹ the garrison of Anzac for a time consisted of only 10,000 rifles, made up of three attenuated brigades of Australian infantry and four battalions² of the Royal Naval Division. These troops had not only to fight and dig; they had also to build roads and cut paths; and there were heavy and incessant fatigues for disembarking stores and carrying food and water up to the line. There was little rest for anyone; and with the enemy showing a constant activity, and the position at the head of Monash Gully still perilously insecure, the tension of the first few weeks at Anzac has been described by the Australians as greater than anything they subsequently experienced in other theatres of war.³

¹ 6th-3th May. See Vol. I. pp. 324-6.

² Organized as two brigades under Br.-Generals C. N. Trotman and D. Mercer.

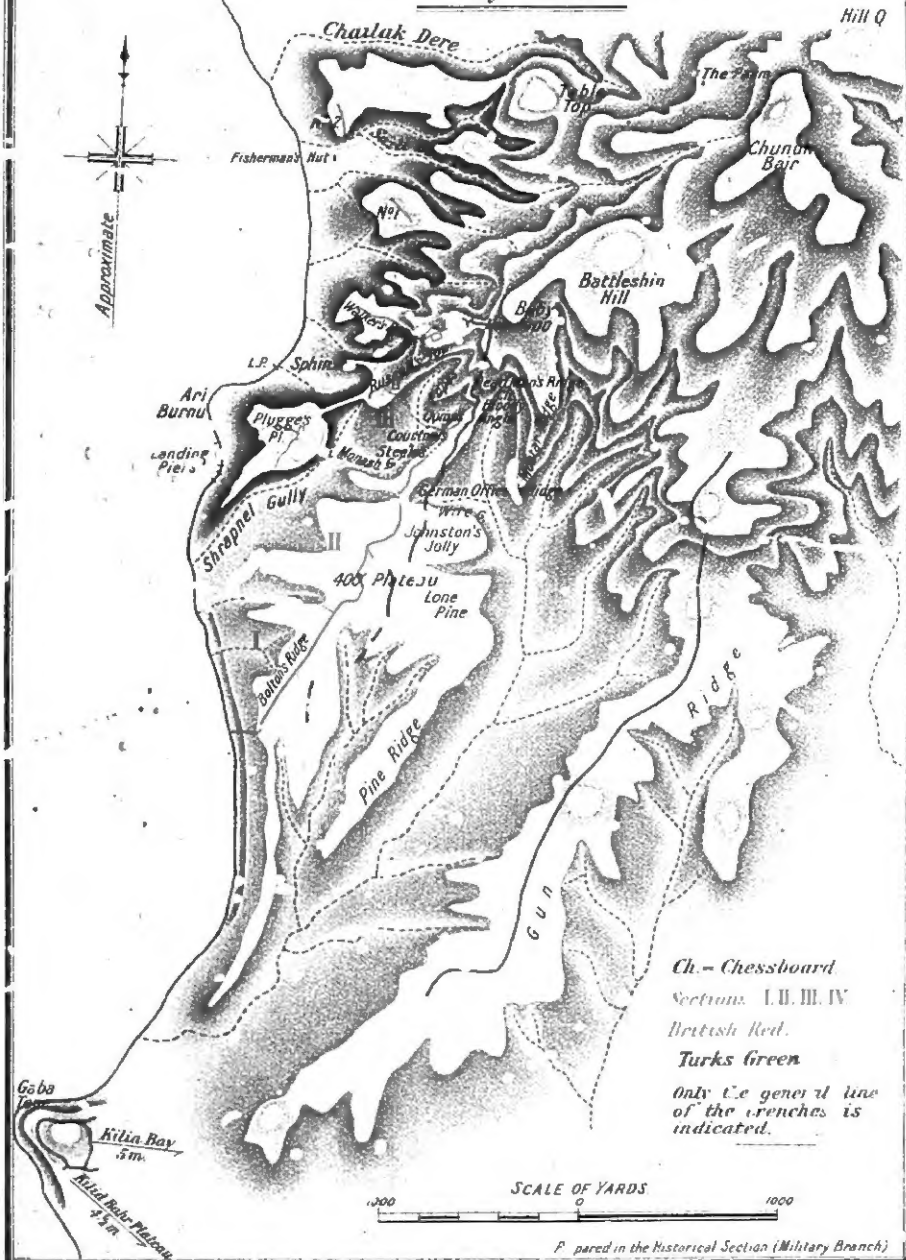
³ Australian Official Account, ii. p. 51.

Sketch 1.

Sketch 1.

ANZAC

Opposing lines towards the end of May 1915.



The front line at Anzac was at this time divided into four sections, numbered 1 to 4 from the right. Of these, the two southern sections were held by the 1st and 3rd Brigades of the 1st Australian Division under Major-General W. T. Bridges, and the two northern by the 4th Australian Brigade of the New Zealand and Australian Division under Major-General Sir A. J. Godley, reinforced by the four battalions of the Royal Naval Division.

On the extreme right of No. 1 Section the defences consisted of a wire entanglement running up from the beach, guarded by a few sentry posts on the slope above it. Thence the line continued along the summit of Bolton's Ridge to the southern end of 400 Plateau.

No. 2 Section extended due north along the western edge of 400 Plateau and thence to Steele's Post, which marked the northern limit of the 1st Australian Division. As early as the first week in May the front-line trenches on Bolton's Ridge and 400 Plateau were deep and continuous, for in both these sections the troops had been fairly free from attack. Further north, however, owing to the proximity of the Turkish posts and to the fact that parts of the line were overlooked by high ground at the head of Monash Gully, the lateral extension of the trenches at Steele's could be effected only by sapping and tunnelling, and it was nearly the middle of May before through communication between 400 Plateau and the right of No. 3 Section was satisfactorily completed.

No. 3 Section, which began at Courtney's, included the apex of the Anzac triangle, and was at once the most exposed section in the area and the most troublesome to organize for defence. It consisted of three isolated posts,¹ Courtney's, Quinn's, and Pope's. Of these, the two first-named, like Steele's, were situated at the head of narrow indentations in the steep slopes of the ridge. The third was on the edge of the spur which separates the eastern and western forks of Monash Gully.

Between Quinn's and Pope's was a gap of 150 yards, and from Pope's to the right of No. 4 Section on Russell's Top another gap of 250 yards. Not until the middle of May, when the construction of a communication trench down the steep side of Russell's Top was undertaken, did daylight communica-

¹ The word "post" as at first applied to these defensive areas was somewhat misleading. Their garrisons were never less than two companies of infantry and were eventually in each case at least a battalion. All these posts were named after officers particularly associated with their defence: Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Courtney, 14th Battalion, Major H. Quinn, 15th Battalion, and Lieut.-Colonel H. Pope, 16th Battalion. Steele's Post, though officially spelt with a final *e*, was called after Major T. H. Steel, 14th Battalion.

tion between Nos. 3 and 4 Sections become possible. Behind No. 3 Section, in case the garrisons of Quinn's and Pope's should be driven from their positions, a second line was eventually dug across Monash Gully from Courtney's to Russell's Top.

No. 4 Section stretched across Russell's Top, where it was confronted by strong Turkish trenches south of the Nek and on the summit of Baby 700 beyond. It then ran down Walker's Ridge to the beach, with two small posts, known as Nos. 1 and 2 Outposts, thrown forward to the foothills on either side of the mouth of Sazli Beit Dere. Until the completion of a deep trench along the foreshore, communication with these outposts could only be effected by night.

The presence of warships off the coast was a great help to the Anzac corps, for neither from the north nor south could the Turks show themselves in any numbers without drawing the navy's fire. Probably for this reason, the two flank sections continued to be less closely hemmed in by the enemy than those in the centre. In the early days the Australians on the right were able to carry out a nightly reconnaissance for some distance in the direction of Gaba Tepe. The New Zealanders on the left had a similar freedom of movement, and information collected by their patrols eventually led to highly important developments.

The question of adequate artillery support for the troops in the two central sections remained throughout these weeks an almost insoluble problem. With the exception of two Indian mountain batteries, one New Zealand battery of 4.5-inch howitzers, and two old 6-inch howitzers landed by the navy on the 15th May,¹ the artillery at General Birdwood's disposal consisted only of 18-pdr. guns,² which were quite unsuited to the ground. It was almost impossible to find positions from which they could engage the enemy trenches, or even the Turkish guns in rear, without themselves being exposed to enfilade fire at ranges of only a few hundred yards. In a few places 18-pdr. guns posted on the extreme right could fire on targets on the extreme left, and *vice versa*. But by the middle of May it had only been possible to find positions for about twenty all told, and many were such as no artillery officer can ever before have dreamed of occupying with 18-pdr. guns.

These two pieces, and one old 4.7 inch gun landed later, had originally been sent out by the Admiralty with the R.N.D. At Anzac they formed the Australian Heavy Battery, and were manned by R.M.A. and Australian detachment.

No high-explosive shell for 18-pdrs. was available at Anzac till the middle of June, and then only in very small quantities.

The Turkish artillerymen were faced with no such problem. With excellent concealed positions in rear of Gun Ridge, and direct ground observation from both flanks, it was only the lack of material which prevented the Turks from obliterating the Anzac line.¹

The Australians and New Zealanders had already inflicted such heavy casualties on the Turks² that Liman von Sanders himself, "after the bloody encounters of the first two weeks", instructed Essad Pasha, commander of the northern zone, to refrain for the present from attempting anything big. He ordered him, however, to ensure the retention at all costs of the commanding positions which his troops already held, and to protect his front line from naval bombardment by pushing his trenches as close as possible to those of the invader.³ This order led to almost continuous fighting throughout the second and third weeks of May, particularly in the neighbourhood of Quinn's, Courtney's, and Steele's Posts, where the Anzac garrisons were struggling to keep and if possible to extend their precarious foothold on the extreme western edge of the crest.

The situation of the two posts at Courtney's and Quinn's was almost fantastic, and the determination of the troops who clung to those perilous yet vitally important positions during the first month of the campaign has won a legendary fame. The front-line trenches, at first little more than shallow rifle pits, were only a few paces in front of the western edge of the crest. The Turkish trenches opposite were at some points scarcely ten yards away, and the Turks, amply supplied with hand-grenades while the Australians at first had none,⁴ needed

¹ The Turkish artillery opposite Anzac in the latter half of May probably consisted of 6 mountain and 4 field batteries, one battery of 5·9-inch hows, and one of 8-inch hows.—between 40 and 50 guns in all.

² The Turkish official account admits the loss of over 14,000 men in the Anzac zone between 25th April and 4th May.

³ "Fünf Jahre Türkei" pp. 95-8.

Not expecting trench warfare to supervene on the peninsula, the War Office had despatched the Expeditionary Force without hand-grenades, trench mortars, periscopes or any of the trench stores which were now proving essential. See Vol. I. Chapter VI.

On 22nd March, when Sir Ian Hamilton first foresaw the possibility of trench fighting, he wired home for trench mortars, and the War Office promised to send him 20 from England and four from Japan. On 12th May he was informed that only 10 of the 20 promised from England could be spared. Pending the arrival of bombs, periscopes and trench mortars from home, the Australian engineers, as also the engineers at Helles, started the manufacture on the beach of hand-grenades made of jam tins filled with scrap iron and a small explosive charge. Improvised periscopes were also made out of pieces of mirror taken from the cabins of the transports and tied to the end of a stick. The Garland trench mortar, made in Cairo (see Vol. I. Chapter VI.), was also in great request, though its usefulness was limited. [See over

only to drive back the invaders a distance of five yards to hurl them into the valley. At both posts the Australian supports had at first to be accommodated in the deep valley below, or on small terraces some distance beneath the crest, where there was little cover from enfilade fire from the head of the ravine. At Quinn's the position was particularly dangerous, for there the Australian trenches were overlooked by German Officer's Trench, 150 yards to the right, while the left of the post was under point-blank fire from Turkish marksmen on a spur called Dead Man's Ridge. Fortunately this spur was in turn under direct fire from Pope's, and sniping from its trenches cannot have been a healthy pastime. Nevertheless in the early days of the campaign Turkish sharpshooters were continually active in this locality, and not only inflicted considerable loss on the garrison of Quinn's but seriously interfered with the traffic in Monash Gully.

Little by little, Anzac genius triumphed over these difficulties. Marksmen specially posted in other parts of the position got the upper hand of the Turkish sharpshooters; and at Quinn's itself, as a result of ceaseless work and bitter fighting, the perilous foothold on the crest was gradually extended and secured. By sapping forward, and joining the ends of the saps, a new front line was completed in even closer touch with the enemy, and lateral communication with Courtney's was effected by means of a tunnel. During the first three weeks in May, however, the situation at this vital point remained precarious. With a deadly fire beating against the parapet from three sides, it was impossible to peep over the top for an instant without being shot. In order to guard against a sudden enemy rush the trenches were packed with troops day and night, and when Turkish bombs were thrown into the crowded line the only means of retaliation was to catch and throw them back before they exploded.

This was the situation when on the 5th May the Turks opposite to Quinn's were suspected of mining. On the 9th May, as three listening galleries, hurriedly pushed out towards the Turks, had failed to obtain any confirmation of the report, General Godley decided that the enemy's position must be raided that night. The arrangements for the operation were

It must be remembered that even in France the supply of hand-grenades was still very restricted; by March 1915 it had not reached the minimum of 4,000 per month asked for by Sir John French. As for trench mortars, the whole output in the United Kingdom for the first quarter of 1915 was only 75, and for the second quarter 225. (See "Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1915" Vol. I, pp. 7 & 8.)

left to Lieut.-Colonel J. H. Cannan, 15th Battalion, whose troops were to carry it out.

Colonel Cannan decided to force an entry into the Turkish line at three different points with three parties numbering 100 men in all. Three smaller parties were to follow in rear, and to dig communication trenches across No Man's Land. The attack was launched at 10.45 P.M. The Turks were surprised; their trenches were entered at all three points; and the Australian party on the right, after bayoneting a number of the garrison, pushed rashly on into the valley beyond. The three digging parties began to do their work, and for a moment all seemed well. But the attacking troops in the captured trench could not establish touch with each other. Those Turks who still remained at their posts were reinforced and began to attack with bombs; and though the Australians were strengthened by a company of the 16th and some men of the 13th, they were at last forced back to their line with a loss of over 200 killed and wounded, including ten officers killed.

About the 12th May the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade, numbering about 3,000 men in all, arrived from Egypt for dismounted service with the New Zealand and Australian Division.¹ Of all the reinforcements to reach Anzac during the campaign none were more welcome, or rendered better service, than the Australian and New Zealand mounted troops who served on the peninsula as infantry.² They were composed of a splendid class of countryman and, although young and inexperienced, they developed into fine soldiers.

The communication trenches across No Man's Land begun by the Australians in the affair of the 9th/10th May were now adding to the difficulties of the garrison of Quinn's. Taking advantage of these covered lines of approach, the Turks made still more frequent bombing attacks, and the 2nd Light Horse,

¹ The four battalions of the Royal Naval Division at Anzac were then returned to their division at Helles.

² Altogether thirteen regiments of Australian Light Horse and four regiments of New Zealand Mounted Rifles served as infantry in Gallipoli:

1st Aust. L.H. Bde. (1st, 2nd and 3rd Regts.): to N.Z. and A. Division.
N.Z. Mtd. Rifles Bde. (Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington Mtd. Rifles): to N.Z. and A. Division.

4th Regt. Aust. L.H.: divisional troops 1st Aust. Division.

Otago Mtd. Rifles: divisional troops N.Z. and A. Division.

2nd Aust. L.H. Bde. (5th, 6th and 7th Regts.): to 1st Aust. Division.

3rd Aust. L.H. Bde. (8th, 9th and 10th Regts.): to N.Z. and A. Division.

4th Aust. L.H. Bde. Temporarily broken up in Egypt. The 11th and 12th Regts. reinforced the 1st and 3rd L.H. Bdes., and the 13th Regt. became divisional troops 2nd Aust. Division.

who were holding the post, began to suffer heavily. On the 14th May, after Generals Birdwood and Godley had visited the position,¹ it was decided that the communication trenches must be filled in that night under cover of a second raid. The 15th Battalion was ordered to replace the 2nd Light Horse before the operation began, but the raid itself was to be carried out by one squadron of the latter regiment, under Major D. M. L. Graham.

At 1.45 A.M. on the 14th the Queenslanders scrambled over the parapet, and were met by a galling fire. Only a few men succeeded in reaching the enemy's position, and in twenty minutes the attacking troops were back in their own line with a loss of 46 killed, wounded and missing (including Major Graham killed) out of the 65 men who actually left the trenches.

It was now clear that the solution of the problem at Quinn's must depend more on sapping and tunnelling than on attempts to attack over the open, and above all upon the construction of overhead cover and the provision of more bombs. Additional engineers were sent up to the post; and, with such timber as could be obtained from the limited supply at the beach, the more exposed parts of the line were gradually roofed in. Nevertheless, the strain on the troops in this position remained so acute that the practice of relieving the garrison every 48 hours was continued for some time.

Meanwhile Turkish marksmen on Dead Man's Ridge continued to cause a large number of casualties in Monash Gully, which was the only approach to the posts at the head of the ravine. Despite the construction of high sandbag traverses from each side of the valley these daily losses threatened to become a heavy drain on the force, and it was here that on the 15th May General Bridges was mortally wounded. Colonel J. G. Legge, at that time Chief of the Staff in Australia, was nominated to succeed him, and pending his arrival the command of the 1st Australian Division was entrusted to Br.-General H. B. Walker of the 1st Australian Brigade.²

Turkish guns somewhere to the north of Anzac were still causing a good deal of trouble to the beach working parties,³ so at 3 A.M. on the 14th May 100 men of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles under Major G. F. Hutton were sent off in a destroyer

¹ While looking at the enemy's line that morning General Birdwood had his periscope smashed by an enemy sniper and was slightly wounded.

Colonel Nevill M. Smyth, V.C., was appointed to command the 1st Australian Brigade.

At times the Turks also caused a good deal of discomfort to the Anzac garrison, though luckily not much damage, by fire from Turkish warships in the Straits.

to carry out another raid on the southern horn of Suvla Bay, with a view to destroying any observation station which might be found there.¹ These troops, who had only arrived from Egypt the day before, effected their landing unopposed, and the Turkish trench on Lala Baba, where 17 Turks had been surprised in the previous raid, showed no signs of recent occupation. Three sheep grazing on the hill-side were rounded up and taken back to the boats, and after a vain search for hostile telephones or signalling apparatus the party re-embarked without further incident.

The constant re-shuffling of units in the Turkish divisions on the peninsula, and the haphazard manner in which wastage was replaced by drafts belonging to regiments in other parts of Turkey, made it difficult for the British Intelligence service to gauge the strength of the Turks, while the great shortage of British aircraft² added to the difficulty of discovering their dispositions. At Anzac on the 16th May the opposing Turkish garrison was believed to consist of two divisions, totalling between 15,000 and 20,000 men. Actually this number was an under-estimate, but even so the figure was sufficiently disquieting, and the return of the 2nd Australian Brigade from Helles on the 18th May provided a very welcome addition to the defence. The arrival of this brigade was indeed opportune, for at that very moment the Turks were preparing an ambitious plan to drive the Anzac garrison into the sea.

THE ACTION OF THE 19TH MAY³

The first signs of an imminent attack on the Anzac position were noticed on the 18th May. Ever since the landing on the 25th April the two central sections of the Australian line had been deluged with a constant hail of rifle fire. But on the 18th May the firing suddenly ceased, and the unaccustomed silence aroused suspicions which, later in the day, were confirmed by a message from G.H.Q. Naval aeroplanes had seen large enemy concentrations east of Anzac, and considerable reinforcements were landing at Ak Bashi Bay. Soon after five o'clock both

¹ The previous raid was made on 2nd May. See Vol. I. Chapter XVIII.

² About this time Sir Ian Hamilton reported that only four aeroplanes fitted with wireless were available for spotting for artillery; three of these had been placed at his disposal and the navy was keeping the fourth. He further reported that 10 out of the 15 Henri Farman planes were useless and all the B.E.2c's; and that none of the seaplanes were suitable for military work. A few days later one of his aeroplanes fitted with wireless crashed bringing his numbers down to two.

³ The official title of this action, as decided by the Battles Nomenclature Committee, is "The Defence of Anzac."

divisions in the line were warned to expect an attack, and shortly afterwards the Anzac trenches were subjected to a heavy bombardment from south, east and north.

At this time the four sections of the Anzac position were held as follows:

- No. 1 (right) Section: 3rd Australian Brigade (Colonel E. G. Sinclair-MacLagan).
- No. 2 (right central) Section: 1st Australian Brigade (Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Owen).
- No. 3 (left central) Section (commander, Colonel H. G. Chauvel): 4th Australian Brigade (Colonel J. Monash); 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade (Colonel H. G. Chauvel)
- No. 4 (left) Section: New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade (Colonel A. H. Russell).

The 2nd Australian Brigade was in local reserve in Shrapnel Gully, and the total number of rifles available for the defence was 12,500. On the beach was a general reserve of sixteen machine guns.

It is now known that since the beginning of May the Turks in the northern zone had consisted of the 19th and 5th Divisions holding the line, and the 16th, a fresh division, in local reserve. During the period when the Anzac corps was weakest, therefore, it had been confronted by at least 25,000 men, or a ratio of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

According to the Turkish official account, the attack about to be launched had been ordered by Enver Pasha, who had visited the peninsula a few days earlier and ordered a general assault to be delivered as soon as the 2nd Division arrived from Constantinople. This division began to arrive on the 16th May. The troops for the Turkish attack amounted therefore to four divisions, totalling 42 battalions,¹ and their rifle strength has been computed by various Turkish authorities at between 30,000 and 40,000 men.

The Turkish plan was to attack a little before dawn, break the centre of the Anzac line, drive the troops from their trenches and destroy them on the beach.

The moon went down shortly before midnight on the 18th May. At three o'clock next morning the Anzac garrison stood to arms, and about twenty minutes later, a little before daybreak, an endless column of Turks, with bayonets fixed, loomed into view, advancing up Wire Gully. Heavy fire was opened on

¹ 2nd and 5th Divisions, each of 9 battalions, and 16th and 19th Divisions each of 12 battalions.

them, but the Turks came on undaunted, and other long lines of infantry began to swarm forward over both lobes of 400 Plateau.

The Turkish trenches on the plateau were about two hundred yards from those of the Australians, and the intervening ground, though covered with low scrub, was mostly flat as a board. Over this level space line after line of Turks came steadily forward, while the Australians, standing or sitting on their parapets to get a better view, mowed them down with their fire. Further north a violent attack, to be repeated five times, was launched against Quinn's, while other assaults were made on the trenches opposite the Nek, on Pope's, on Courtney's and on Bolton's Ridge. But only at one point, and there only for a few moments,¹ did the enemy succeed in gaining a foothold in the Anzac trenches, and by 5 A.M. the great attack had collapsed. Here and there for some hours spasmodic efforts were made to renew the assault, but each attempt was crushed by rifle fire as soon as it started. By 11 A.M. the battle was over.

According to their own official account, the Turkish losses in this disastrous failure amounted to 10,000 men, and more than 3,000 dead were counted that afternoon in front of the Australian trenches. The Anzac losses were about six hundred.

Throughout the 19th the knowledge that there were still large numbers of enemy troops in the neighbourhood created some uneasiness at General Birdwood's headquarters, and this was increased by the statement of a captured Turkish officer, that an even heavier attack would be delivered next morning. Soon after midday General Birdwood telegraphed to G.H.Q. asking that the New Zealand Brigade, still serving at Helles, might return forthwith to Anzac. This request was sanctioned, and the brigade embarked at W Beach the same evening.²

The orders issued to the Anzac troops on the night of the 18th had made no mention of counter-attacking in the event of the enemy's assault collapsing, and very unfortunately nothing of the kind was attempted at the moment of his greatest

¹ Helped by dead ground immediately in front of the trench, a party of Turks succeeded in capturing one corner of Courtney's Post after a bombing attack. But the Turks were ejected, mainly by the dash and skill of Lt.-Corporal A. Jack, 14th Battalion, one of the survivors from the bombing attack. This gallant N.C.O. was awarded the V.C.

² The brigade landed at Anzac before daybreak on the 20th, and was followed a few hours later by the 2nd and 3rd Light Horse Brigades and by one squadron of the Otago Mounted Rifles from Egypt. The strength of the Anzac garrison was thus increased to 20,000 men. Another welcome addition to the force this day was the arrival of the four promised Japanese trench mortars, firing a 30-lb. bomb.

May. confusion. About 2 P.M. General Godley issued orders for a hundred men of the Wellington Mounted Rifles on Russell's Top to raid the enemy's trenches at the Nek. But by then some sort of order had been established in the Turkish line; and the first men to show above the parapet were met by so fierce a fire that the operation was countermanded by the senior officer on the spot. A quarter of an hour later a message from G.H.Q. ordered General Birdwood to seize every opportunity of counter-attacking as soon as the enemy's attacks had been repulsed. But the moment for a successful counter-attack had by that time slipped away.

Not the least important advantage gained by the Australians on the 19th was the capture of several more sheets of a Turkish map of the peninsula, some portions of which had been captured at Helles a few days earlier. Up to this date the maps of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force had been very inaccurate and misleading, but, with the help of these sheets, it was soon possible to issue an excellent map to all units.¹

THE ANZAC ARMISTICE

For sanitary reasons alone, the presence of several thousand Turkish corpses close to the Australian front line opened up a new and alarming problem for the Anzac corps on the evening of the 19th May. It would be impossible to withdraw the Anzac line a single yard nearer to the edge of the crest. Yet the conditions in the forward trenches threatened in the course of a few days to become unbearable. In these circumstances, General Birdwood proposed to G.H.Q. on the night of the 19th that he should get into communication with the enemy next day and arrange a temporary suspension of arms for the removal of dead and wounded.

Sir Ian Hamilton, fearing that such a request might be used by the enemy for propaganda, replied that no negotiations with the enemy were to be opened by the Anzac corps, but that if the Turks themselves asked permission to bury their dead, they should be allowed to do so. General Birdwood answered that the Turks were habitually so callous about their dead, that they were unlikely to initiate proposals: yet, unless something were done in the matter, the Australian trenches would soon be uninhabitable. To this Sir Ian Hamilton replied that

¹ A Turkish officer, who was serving at the time on Essad Pasha's staff, and has read these pages in typescript, adds the information that at the beginning of the campaign the Turks, too, had only an indifferent map of the Anzac area, and that the sheets captured by us on the 19th had been issued to Turkish units the day before.

there was no objection to the Australians throwing messages May across to the Turks saying that they could come out to bury their dead and rescue the wounded, but that no white flag was to be hoisted first from the Anzac line and no formal communication made to the Turkish commander on the initiative of the Anzac corps.

This was the situation when, on the evening of the 20th, the officer in command of No. 2 Section of the Anzac line,¹ who knew nothing about the foregoing messages, decided on his own initiative that something must be done to succour the wounded Turks who were lying close to his front line. He resolved to send out stretcher-bearers, and, as a first step, he ordered the hoisting of a Red Cross flag. This flag was instantly shot down by the Turks, but a moment later a Turkish messenger came running across with a verbal message of apology. Shortly afterwards several Red Crescent flags appeared in the Turkish trenches, and a number of Turkish stretcher-bearers clambered into the open. Australian officers and men went out to meet them; a certain amount of burying was done by both sides; and a number of wounded were collected. Major-General Walker, who happened to arrive on the scene just as this informal truce began, at once sent an officer to corps headquarters to ask for orders.

The first news of these happenings to reach the corps came from No. 3 Section, whence it was also reported that an Australian officer, who had gone forward to meet the Turkish stretcher parties, had found the hostile trenches "crowded as full" "as they could hold with armed men". Owing to the lateness of the hour and fearing that some ruse was being attempted by the enemy, General Birdwood issued an order that no removal of dead must be allowed by night, and that the Turks must be informed that if they wished to remove their dead an envoy with a white flag should be sent along the beach from Gaba Tepe next morning to arrange details.

A few minutes later, on the arrival of General Walker's report, this order was repeated direct to him, and the following message, signed by his A.D.C., was handed to a Turkish officer:

If you want a truce to bury your dead, send a staff officer, under a flag of truce, to our headquarters via the Gaba Tepe road, between 10 A.M. and 12 noon to-morrow, 21st May

Meanwhile, General Birdwood, still unaware that Colonel Owen had hoisted a Red Cross flag, reported somewhat inaccurately to G.H.Q. that the Turks had been the first to ask for an

¹ Colonel R. H. Owen, temporarily commanding 1st Australian Brigade

May. informal truce. Colonel Owen, it is true, had made no overtures to the Turks. But the Turks, too, had refrained from any overtures; they had merely sent out stretcher-bearers under cover of a Red Crescent flag, and there was ample justification for their subsequent statement that the initiative in this respect had been shown by the Australians.

The Turks, however, were quick to avail themselves of the opportunity now offered for obtaining a suspension of arms. Next morning a Turkish officer duly appeared on the Gaba Tepe road,¹ and after a meeting with General Birdwood, and a second conference on the 22nd between the Turkish envoy and General Braithwaite, Sir Ian Hamilton's Chief of the General Staff, arrangements for an armistice were drawn and mutually accepted by Sir Ian Hamilton and Marshal Liman von Sanders. The armistice, the terms of which were scrupulously carried out by both sides, lasted from 7.30 A.M. to 4.30 P.M. on the 24th, and during this period at least 3,000 Turkish dead were buried.

One lesson learnt by the Turk in the battle of the 19th May was that the Australians and New Zealanders could not be turned out of their trenches except with the assistance of heavy artillery and an enormous expenditure of high-explosive shell. But they also learnt the corollary, that their own much stronger position was practically invulnerable, and they soon reduced their garrison in the northern zone to two divisions. The *16th* and *19th Divisions*, both by this time very weak in numbers, were left to hold the trenches; the *5th Division* was withdrawn to rest, and the *2nd* was despatched to the southern zone.

During the last week of May the situation on most parts of the Anzac front was comparatively quiet, but for several days in succession the garrison of Quinn's was again alarmed by sounds of enemy mining. Three camouflets were fired by the Australian engineers in an attempt to blow in the enemy's tunnels, but on the evening of the 28th the tapping still continued. Early next morning, when the 13th Battalion was holding the post, a part of the front line was suddenly blown up with all its garrison; and a number of Turks seized the crater and pressed forward into the second-line trenches. For a moment the situation was critical, but the men of the 13th on either side of the captured trencher stood firm; counter-attacks were made by their supports and by men of the 15th; and after some hours of hand-to-hand fighting the intruders were driven out with heavy loss. Over sixty Turkish dead were counted in

¹ The "road" was at that time a mere track along the coast.

the Australian trenches and a number of prisoners were taken. May. The Australian casualties amounted to 33 killed (including Major Quinn) and 178 wounded.

After this action the 4th Australian Brigade, which had been fighting continuously for five weeks at the head of Monash Gully, was withdrawn to rest,¹ on relief by the New Zealand Infantry Brigade from Helles.

The garrison of Anzac now consisted of about 20,000 men, and, as the action of the 19th May had shown that only half that number was needed to hold the position, the corps commander and his chief staff officer (Lieut.-Colonel A. Skeen) were again examining the possibility of launching a successful attack in the northern zone.

FUTURE PLANS

As early as the 13th May General Birdwood had written a personal letter to Sir Ian on the subject of breaking out from the Anzac position. This letter was of great importance; it induced the Commander-in-Chief to consider for the first time the advisability of launching his main attack from Anzac, and it contained the germ of the main idea which underlay the Anzac-Suvla offensive three months later. The main plan of the August offensive, as will be shown in a later chapter, was to seize the heights of Chunuk Bair and Koja Chemen Tepe (Hill 971) by a turning movement from the Anzac left flank. It was precisely a movement of this nature which General Birdwood suggested. He remarked that one of the great weaknesses of his existing position was that it was on the lower slopes of the main range and completely overlooked by the enemy. His force had hitherto been too weak to advance, and he now found himself hemmed in everywhere by two or three continuous lines of trenches except on his extreme left flank. If, however, he could be reinforced by General Cox's brigade of Indian troops, who were experts in hill climbing, he would hope to make a sweeping movement round his left, and scale and occupy the heights of Koja Chemen Tepe. With his left on this point and his line running south-west down the main ridge, he would overlook the whole valley towards the Straits. As he could not guarantee that one additional brigade would be enough to enable him to hold so extended a front, he suggested that, after Achi Baba had been captured, it might be advantageous to land a "really

¹ The "rest area" was a gully on the seaward side of Russell's Top, well protected from enemy fire, but less than 800 yards from the enemy's front line. In such a position there was of course no rest from the noise of battle and no respite from daily fatigues.

May "large force" at Anzac. He could then make certain of securing a position overlooking Kilia Bay, and ought "with luck" to be able to sever all the communications of the Turks with the southern end of the peninsula.

This last idea exactly corresponded with Sir Ian Hamilton's original motive for landing General Birdwood's corps at Anzac. In his special instructions to General Birdwood, dated the 13th April, he had told him that if he could penetrate as far as Mai Tepe, his success should be even more valuable than the capture of Kilid Bahr. During the first three weeks of the campaign the potentialities of the Anzac position had been rather overlooked at General Headquarters, where all eyes had been riveted on the struggle for Achi Baba. But the disappointing results of the Second Battle of Krithia had inclined Sir Ian Hamilton to search for an easier method of loosening the Turkish grip on the Narrows, and General Birdwood's suggestion happened to coincide with the War Council's enquiry as to the number of divisions that would be required to bring the campaign to an early conclusion.

On the 16th May, therefore, the Commander-in-Chief visited Anzac headquarters to discuss the possibilities of the situation. The same evening General Birdwood wrote him a second private letter, explaining in detail the course he would propose to adopt if provided with one extra division in addition to the Indian brigade. Next morning he was ordered by G.H.Q. to send in an official appreciation of the situation in his front, "together with an estimate of the reinforcements he considered necessary to carry out the scheme outlined in the instructions issued to him on the 13th April."

Sir Ian Hamilton's growing inclination to choose the Anzac zone for the delivery of his decisive blow can be gauged from a letter which he wrote to General Birdwood on the 18th May:

More and more it seems to me that when we have once got Achi Baba we may not find it advisable to press on further from the south. Then, if my half-formed ideas mature as I think possible, the main push and decisive movement will be made from the base you are so gallantly holding. I want you, and more especially your regimental officers and men, who have not and cannot possibly have a wide view of the war chessboard in their ken, to realize the full importance of the work they are making good at the hourly risk of their lives. To them it must sometimes seem a very inadequate reward to hold a few miles of worthless scrubby mountain, but it is not so, and the maintenance of the position at Sari Bair may prove to be the fulcrum for the lever that will topple over Germany and the pride of the Germans.



THE NORTHERN FLANK AT ANZAC

The battle of the 19th May delayed until the end of the May month the completion of the official appreciation asked for by G.H.Q. But the New Zealand Mounted Rifles meanwhile persevered with the reconnaissance of Sazli Beit Dere and Chailak Dere, both of which seemed to give direct if difficult access to the main ridge near Chunuk Bair. During the latter half of May very valuable work was done in this direction under the leadership of Major P. J. Overton of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles. In addition, since the success of any out-flanking movement on the left would depend upon the enemy continuing to hold the northern ridges lightly, General Birdwood arranged that every effort should be made, by means of minor enterprises from his southern trenches, to rivet the Turks' attention to their Gaba Tepe flank.

The frequent and daring patrols in Sazli Beit Dere unfortunately attracted the notice of the Turks, and on the 27th May a new Turkish trench was discovered on the same spur as, and about three hundred yards to the east of, No. 2 Outpost. Without reference to corps headquarters a squadron of the Canterbury regiment seems to have been ordered to take and occupy this trench on the night of the 28th. The trench was captured with little trouble, but when morning came the garrison found that they were overlooked by a flat-topped knoll (afterwards called "Table Top"), 200 yards to the east, and that the only direct route between the new post and the knoll was a precipitous-sided neck. The new post (called "No. 3 Outpost")¹ was held throughout the day, but the following evening, soon after its occupants had been relieved by a squadron of the Wellington regiment under Major S. Chambers, it was fiercely attacked from three sides. Continuous fighting ensued for 24 hours, and on the night of the 30th the garrison was withdrawn and the post abandoned by order of corps headquarters.

Despite the unwelcome attention which this activity had attracted to his northern flank, General Birdwood was still convinced that an advance from that flank would offer him the best prospect of breaking out successfully from his position; and as the scheme which he sent in to General Headquarters on the 30th May formed the basis of the plan which was put into operation in August, it is of interest to examine it in detail. Describing the problem which was confronting him, General Birdwood wrote:

The enemy are entrenched all round this position, and have been daily making their positions stronger. . . . I am, however, in hopes

¹ Afterwards known as Old No. 3 Post. See Sketch 16.

May. that I may be able to turn a good deal of their position by making a big sweeping movement round my left flank to the Sari Bair ridge. The securing of this ridge I consider absolutely essential before any move whatever can be made from here. . . . The Sari Bair country is most difficult—far more so even than any we have occupied so far. It is broken up by many and deep ravines. There are a large number of precipices, and there is thick scrub everywhere. The enemy have entrenched this part also, but not to such an extent as elsewhere. I hope that by attacking over this area by night, on a really broad front, we may be able to rattle the Turks. . . . For this, a certain element of surprise is necessary, as they . . . could reinforce the crest line before we could reach it. I realize that . . . a night attack will involve a certain number of troops losing their way. This, however, is not a matter of consequence, as they will know they all have to press upwards, and matters will be rectified in the morning.

I should have liked to direct the left of my attack, so as to envelop the actual Point 971. From personal reconnaissance, however, made from as far as one can see on shore and from a destroyer . . . I find that that point is entirely cut off from the main ridge by precipices.¹ . . . My plan would be to attack the ridge with three brigades of a total of about 8,000 men and occupy a position Hill Q—Chunuk Bair—Battleship Hill. Having done this, the position would have to be consolidated. . . . When secured, I should hope to move down the ridge with at least one brigade, to take the enemy's trenches facing my present position in rear. As this brigade approached the north-east corner of my present position,² the brigade occupying that sector would move forward to meet it, and I would propose . . . an advance of the force now holding Nos. 1 and 2 Sections to occupy the whole of the 400 Plateau, including Pine Ridge. . . . Gaba Tepe would also be captured as part of this advance.

To carry out these operations, which would constitute the first phase of the offensive, General Birdwood estimated his requirements at 22,000 rifles. His existing force he reckoned at 19,000; so the addition of the Indian brigade would suffice for this phase.

Having gained the above positions, he proposed, as soon afterwards as possible, probably within two days, to attack and occupy Gun Ridge. For this phase, his requirements were placed at one additional division.

Whether or not General Birdwood could have achieved his purpose at that date with a reinforcement of such modest proportions is a point which can never be settled. But from the

¹ This surmise proved incorrect, and Point 971 was eventually included in the objective.

² i.e. the trenches on Russell's Top, south-west of the Nek.

end of May the Turkish positions on his left flank and front May. continued to increase in strength. On the 31st Old No. 3 Post was re-occupied by the enemy, and other trenches soon began to appear on Table Top and the summit of Chunuk Bair. Some of the New Zealand officers, among them Major Overton himself, were soon suggesting that the chances of a successful turning movement by way of these ravines had already disappeared. But General Birdwood still believed that the Turks were not yet seriously alarmed for the safety of their extreme right, and that the absence of any further marked activity on the Anzac left flank would suffice to allay their suspicions.